

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Characterizing Writing Tutorials

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The purpose of this qualitative dissertation was to seek characteristics common to writing tutorials because current discussions and assessments of tutorials rely strongly on specific pedagogical approaches that may or may not be present in all tutorials. This dissertation seeks characteristics common to all tutorials. A second purpose of this dissertation was to explore differences in those characteristics based on levels of flow, a measure of how much a person is likely to repeat an experience, felt by both students and tutors.

The dissertation begins with a review of literature to establish where current understandings of tutorials developed. It then progresses to an examination of six total cases. The cases are made up of individual tutorials; the data points included observation notes from the tutorials, survey results from student and tutor participants, interview data from students and tutors, and video and transcript data from the tutorials themselves. Grounded theory was used to analyze the data, meaning data was reviewed many times and coded through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Data analysis revealed eight characteristics in verbal and nonverbal categories. The verbal categories are questions, praise, mentions of time, negotiating an agenda, and postponing. The nonverbal categories are writing on the text, gaze, and

smiling/laughing. These characteristics, with the exception of postponing, are common to all of the tutorials examined. The fine details of how each characteristics is displayed in each tutorial differ depending on the flow score of the session. The dissertation is able to present general characteristics of all writing tutorials that differ in fine detail based on high and low flow scores.